

Share The Crown
A teaching and music ministry of the Parmenter family
<http://sharethecrown.blogspot.com/>
www.sharethecrown.com

Click here to read [Matthew 14:22-36](#)

In the Bible, Matthew 14:22-36, tells a familiar story of Peter walking on water and sinking, because his faith was lagging. We love to wag our fingers at Peter, but I think he is often misunderstood.

I've heard it before, "Peter just didn't have enough faith." Great, I'm certain I don't have as much faith as Peter did. I must really be in trouble.

Is faith really measured in volume or quantity? What is the central message the account in Matthew 14 is giving us? First, let's ask how we view faith ourselves.

In America we have a number of popular phrases to which individuals cling:

- "Let go and let God." To many that saying is an encouragement to not worry. One writer wrote, "STOP worrying, just say a little prayer and let go of the problem, and let God work it out."
- "Blind Faith Obedience".
- "God said it; I believe it, that's good enough for me." That's what the song says.

Then there is the "Leap of Faith". The leap of faith is believing something without evidence. That might not be what Soren Kierkegaard meant by leap of faith. But to many individuals in America, Leap of faith means to put your faith in something. Anything. Even if it is impossible. It's not important what you have faith in, It's just important to have a faith.

When I look back at the Bible passage, watching Peter, I don't see any of those kinds of faith. In Peter I see, "Eyes Open Faith." I believe Eyes Open Faith is infinitely more rewarding and much more demanding as well. I also believe that it is the way the Biblical to Christians to live.

Looking at the environment leading up to Peter's act of faith and you'll get a better idea what motivated Peter to get out of the boat.

Matthew 14:22 "Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray."

Jesus needed to be alone. We read in the first twelve verses of chapter 14 that John the Baptist had just been beheaded. According to the flesh, John the Baptist's mother Elizabeth and Jesus'

mother Mary were cousins. In God's plan John was the key herald of Jesus' Messiahship. Jesus and John had a bond born out of family, prophecy, and personal respect. After hearing the news that John had been executed, Jesus went some place isolated to get some time alone with the Father.

When he got to the isolated place with His disciples, the whole countryside came out to find Him. This presented an opportunity for Jesus to teach his disciples, which He did when he fed more than 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish.

While this had to have been an unforgettable experience, the disciples must have been exhausted after serving dinner to 5000 plus guests. And Jesus still wanted that time alone with the Father God, so he sent the disciples on ahead in the boat.

This presented another opportunity to test and teach his disciples faith.

Matthew 14:23-29 "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come."

If this were a movie on your DVD player, Peter would be gripping the edge of the boat. Dramatic music would rise as wind whips his hair across his forehead. Moving in slow motion, he starts to lift his leg over the side, and then..... I press pause.

Freeze frame right there.

What is Peter doing? Blind faith? "Jesus said come so I'm coming, and I have no idea why, where or how." Leap of faith? Turn off reason and just jump? Peter had been a fisherman for years. Water was something he knew. He knew how to handle himself in a boat. I bet he had been in other storms; maybe even fallen in a few times. He knew that it is not possible to walk on water, and that in a storm there was little chance his friends would be able to get him back into the boat. So Peter was up to the edge, turn off his brain and jump? Was that it? Or did he decide to say a little prayer and stop worrying about it. Let go and let God.

Was it any of those or was it Eyes Open Faith?

To answer this question let's look back at Peter's relationship with Jesus up to that point. In Matthew 4:18 Jesus calls his first two disciples, Peter and Andrew.

Then in Matthew 4:23, in Galilee, Peter sees Jesus heal every—the Bible says every—disease and sickness among the people. Crowds of people gather for help and he heals them all.

Matthew 8, after the Sermon on the Mount Jesus heals a man w/leprosy. Then a centurion asks Jesus to heal a servant of his. Jesus heals the servant without even being near him. That's long distance healing.

Later he heals Peter's mother-in-law.

The crowds come back, and Jesus is a just a non-stop healer. He doesn't heal common aches and pains. He heals serious medical problems.

In chapter 9, He heals a paralyzed man, a blind guy, and man who is mute. Then He brings a little girl back from the dead.

In chapter 10, he gives his healing authority to the twelve disciples, and they do healing.

In 11 Jesus does a bunch more healing and then the finale! Peter saw the things that Jesus did, and then he saw Jesus divide up 5 loaves and two small fishes in order to feed five thousand people.

Jesus still wasn't done, later he caught up with the disciples boat across several miles of water, during a storm on foot! Our Lord Jesus left no doubt that he is God and has power over all things.

Why did Peter jump onto the water with Christ? Here's a better question, why didn't half the boat jump in after him? At least James and John should have given it a try! The other disciples had seen Jesus evidence power and authority over illness, death, and nature. Why didn't the others get in?

Same reason we don't.

Here's a check point for us to consider, Peter wasn't running blind. Peter hadn't turned off his brain. Peter was taking what he knew of Christ, and was daring enough to put it into practice.

O.K.

Unpause the DVD. Peter steps on the water. He's freaking out, but he is doing it. The storms around him take the advantage and he starts to sink. He tried but couldn't stop sinking, so he cried out to the Lord.

Don't we love to shake our finger at Peter, "Never take your eyes off of God?" Peter failed, because he took his eyes off of God? I disagree. Peter wasn't a failure, he was a success. Peter was a complete success, because he stepped into the storm **with** Jesus, and when he was overwhelmed with the struggle, he turned **to** Jesus Christ for help. That is victory. Not failure.

Failure would have been not stepping out of the boat at all. Failure is ignoring the Lord when we have struggles or ignoring the Lord when things go well. Peter couldn't even save Himself.

He had get Christ to help him up back onto the water. Guess what! **Nobody** can walk on water by themselves, and only a complete fool would try and climb up out and onto the waves by himself.

Peter was a success, because he stepped into the storm with Christ and continued to turn to Christ for support.

So, what do we learn from all this? In order to step out on faith, Peter had to know Christ. In order to step out in faith, Peter had to believe his own eyes and put his belief into practice. Stepping out on faith, means stepping into the storm.

Do you know Christ? Are you in a healthy, growing relationship with Christ? If not then, you won't be able to share in the power of Eyes Open Faith. Do you know His Word? You can't believe Christ if you don't the Bible. The Bible records who Christ is.

I'm not talking just about reading the Bible, but about relating to it. Read it, think about it, and ask God and other Christians questions about it. When you relate to the events and teachings in scripture you are engaging your mind and heart in relation with our Lord. In order to step out in faith, we have to know Christ, and we do that by knowing His Word, the Bible.

Second, in order to step out in faith, we have to believe the testimony of an eye witness account. We weren't there to witness these things, but those who were wrote down some of what they saw. It's called the Bible. If you really believe the Bible is true, then take action on what you know.

In order to step out with Eyes Open Faith, you have to actually believe the eye witness account in scripture, and put your belief into action.

Third, stepping out on faith, means stepping into the storm. Christians who have taken the step to live out their faith will face struggles. Why do Christians struggle? There is a storm raging around them. And to survive they must cry out to God.

Are we are in the middle of a spiritual storm? Look at the world around us. Temptations, apathy and outright resistance to anything Christian constantly swirl around us and at us. The healthy Christians are struggling: struggling against the gale force winds of temptation and old habits, struggling against the tides of peer pressure or socially acceptable sin. Get caught in a storm and quit struggling then you're swept up by the storm and carried away. If you want to step out in faith then realize you are stepping into a storm and you will have struggles.

Check something else. Peter didn't let go and let God, he stepped out of the boat, and he walked on the water (by God's empowerment). After he sank and Christ lifted him back up, Peter walked **with** Christ back through the storm on the way back to the boat. As Peter sank, Jesus could have calmed the storm. Jesus has power over all storms. Instead of taking away the storm, Jesus walked with Peter through it. Peter knew Christ, responded to Jesus' call, put his faith into practice, and struggled through the storm, side-by-side with Jesus Christ.

That is true faith: eyes open faith. I want that faith. Why, so I can be faith healer? Or get a new car or better job? Get rid of the chronic pain that has plagued me for years. Go be a missionary? We always think that powerful faith is for the big stuff.

Is Jesus calling us to do big movie style things? Sometimes, but the most important things that Christ is calling us to are spelled out clearly in the Bible.

Here are some of the ways Jesus is calling us:

- Jesus is calling us: Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.
- Jesus is calling us: Forgive those how have sinned against us.
- Jesus is calling us: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.
- Jesus, through the apostle Paul, is calling us: "In your anger, do not sin." Eph. 4:26

I'll stop there.

These are difficult things Jesus is calling us to. It will be very hard, but I know Christ, and believe He is God. Yet, am I willing to step out of the boat?

There is a man I know. Some years ago we had a disagreement. We had an argument. The anger built to mistrust, and the relationship was broken. I had trusted, admired and looked up to this man. Jesus is calling me. Jesus is saying, come, get out of the boat, and forgive this man.

After a year or so, my anger and resentment had turned to apathy and disappointment. Not exactly a success story. I haven't made a lot of progress, but have struggled to forgive. I repeatedly fail in forgiving and sink beneath the waves. I cry out to Christ for help, and He lifts me up. I've sunk down and been lifted up so many times I feel like a cork in a water fountain.

I know that when Christ calls us, he enables us to follow. He knows we will fall, and when we reach out again, like a baby learning to walk, we grow stronger. If I were a man who could freely forgive others, not harboring anger, what transformation would take place in my relationship with Christ and those around me? It would be a life altering change that would bless me and everyone that I know.

So what is the central message of faith? Make a choice to believe the reliable account of an eye witness to the nature and work of Jesus Christ. Faith is a difficult road, filled with sweet reward, and there is nothing better.

Let's jump into the storm, and walk with Christ.

(All scripture quotes were from the New King James Version © 1982 Thomas Nelson Publishers,)